



Concept Mapping – Comparison Chart

A concept map is a visual display tool that helps students to develop ideas, clarify thinking and organise information. Concept maps, also called

graphic organisers, typically include mind mapping tools, visual maps and diagrams.

	Thinksheet	Edraw	Freemind	Bubbl.us	Kidspiration	Inspiration
	http://www.fishermarriott.com/m/thinkshe.htm	http://www.edrawsoft.com/fr/eemind.php	http://freemind.sourceforge.net	http://bubbl.us/	http://www.inspiration.com/Kidspiration	http://www.inspiration.com/
System	Windows	Windows, Mac	Windows	Online only	Windows, Mac	Windows
Cost	\$155 Free download for 6 months	Freeware Pro version available (\$)	Freeware	Free - online only	\$170 Good multi user deals available for schools	\$170 Good multi user deals available for schools
Description	ThinkSheet uses cards similar to post-it notes. Very simple and intuitive to use with a clean and easy toolbar Appropriate for 7 years up	Comprehensive concept mapping program Appropriate for 12 years up	Comprehensive concept mapping program but we found this less intuitive than other products in this trial Appropriate for 12 years up	Very easy and simple online concept mapping tool Can collaborate online Appropriate for 10 years up	Comprehensive concept mapping tool is simple to use with three toolbars. Text is read aloud Appropriate for 5 to 10 years	Comprehensive concept mapping program that is quite intuitive and easy to learn Appropriate for 12 years up
Images	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Views	Card format Mind mapping format Includes outline panel	Concept mapping format only	Concept mapping format only	Concept mapping format only	Picture View (concept mapping format) Writing View (lists ideas and opens a writing space with each idea)	Diagram view (concept mapping format) Outline view (tree format) Map view (concept maps with branches) Presentation view
CAT summary comment	A simple, clean, easy to use package for maps. It was not as flexible as some of the other options, especially when working with multiple layers.	A flexible program for developing more complex concept mapping tools. It would take some learning time to become familiar with all the options.	Good options for more complex tasks but the inability to export to a writing format limits the usefulness for the education context. We found this less intuitive to use than some of the other program in this study.	An intuitive, simple and easy to use online concept mapping page. Uses text only.	An excellent tool for early learners that are using images with some text. Provides text to speech support. It would take some learning time to be familiar with all the options.	A flexible program with a number of options for more complex tasks using text, images and links. It would take some learning time to be familiar with all the options.

As always, the staff at CAT have endeavoured to represent all products fairly. If you have any further queries or information about products or ideas we would appreciate your feedback.

Literacy support and word prediction

The programs reviewed below offer literacy support and word prediction. All include text-to-speech, and most offer a range of support features such as word prediction, text-to-speech, homophone support and custom dictionaries.

Word prediction programs are ideally suited to students who need to reduce the number of keystrokes pressed (those with motor impairments) and students who are poor spellers or have difficulty with writing tasks.

Word Prediction Program	WordQ version 3 \$280	Soothsayer \$260	Penfriend XL version 4 http://www.penfriend.biz/ \$410 (Portable), \$280 XL v4	Co-Writer version 6 http://www.donichinson.com \$540 (\$310 if upgrade)
Compatibility	Windows and MAC	Windows	Windows	Windows and MAC
What	Toolbar that works with any text	Prediction box with simple menu at the top to access options. Works with any text.	Prediction box with simple menu at the top to access options	Word Window – toolbar that works with application Sentence window or Paragraph window
Speech	Speaks letters, words, sentences as you type (including web pages) Highlights as it reads in review mode in some applications.	Speaks letters, words, punctuation and sentences as you type. Option to speak highlighted text. Speaks prediction box as you dwell (time adjustable) over options.	Speaks letters, words, and sentences as you type. Highlights words as it reads in review mode.	Speaks letters, words, and sentences as you type.
Options	Multiple word strings Prediction box can float or be anchored.	Prediction box follows typing (cannot be anchored) but can be adjusted away from text.	Multiple word strings Prediction box can float or be anchored.	Single words Prediction box can float or be anchored.
Accuracy test	Good results CAT test 19/21 correct	Good results CAT test 18/21 correct	Poor result CAT test 16/21 correct	Good results CAT test 20/21 correct (flexible spelling)
Words	1-9	Size of prediction box	1-12	1-9
Unknown spelling?	Continues to attempt prediction	Prediction box stops predicting	Prediction box stops predicting	Continues to attempt prediction
Other Options	SpeakQ can be added	Predicts sentences (up to 500 characters) that have been entered in a dictionary based on the words you are typing.	Switch accessible onscreen keyboard (can be enlarged) Integrates with Clicker	Templates (AAC, Autism, Developmental Delays, Dyslexia, Motor Impairments and Visual Impairments) Cloud bank. When a topic is selected a bank of common topic words is displayed.
CAT summary comment	Excellent prediction and simple user interface means this would be good for younger students and those who require prediction and speech but don't need other complex features.	Good prediction and simple user interface means this would be good for younger students and those who require prediction but don't need other complex features.	Satisfactory prediction and simple user interface means this would be good for younger students and those who require prediction and speech but don't need other complex features.	This program offers a writing window or a tool bar and offers excellent prediction.
	Good for use with SpeakQ		Good for use with Clicker	

Other products available in comparison format, but omitted from this handout include : Kurzweil (full suite of options, appropriate for students doing research and complex writing tasks – omitted as it works in its own environment), TextHelp Read & Write 9 Gold (Comprehensive toolbar that works with text. Omitted due to expense - \$900) and ClaroRead v 5.5 Plus (comprehensive toolbar that works with any text – omitted due to poor CAT trial results of 14/21). These are available upon request.

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Text-to-Speech

Text to Speech software converts text from a computer document to speech. Text-to-speech software allows the student to listen rather than read (or undertake another activity whilst the computer reads). Some programs can even save speech files to be played at a later time (eg. ipod or mp3 player).

There are a large variety of these programs available in a range of price brackets (many are inexpensive or free). Most work from an on-screen tool bar or clipboard that can be activated when text reading is required.

Word Prediction Program	NaturalReader http://www.naturalreaders.com	ReadPlease http://www.readplease.com/	Wordtalk http://www.wordtalk.org.uk/Home/	DSpeech http://dspeech.en.softonic.com/
Compatibility	Windows and Mac versions available.	Windows operating system.	Windows operating system. Embeds into Microsoft Word.	Windows operating system.
Speech	Text is selected using cut and paste Highlights text when read Audio adjustments Can zoom in and out on text Reads any text file via clipboard	Text is selected using cut and paste Highlights text when read Audio adjustments Reads multiple languages	Embeds into Microsoft Word Highlights text when read Audio adjustments Talking dictionary Saves to .mp3 and .wav	Text can be cut and pasted or typed directly Highlights text when read Audio adjustments Configure the voices in an independent way Reads any text file via clipboard Saves to .mp3 and .wav
Skills Needed	Easy to use	Must be able to use keyboard to manipulate text (cut and paste)	Easy to use	Text can be opened and read, or student needs to be able to use keyboard to manipulate text (cut and paste)

Voice Recognition

Voice Recognition allows the user to enter text onto the computer by speaking. Most packages on the market now allow for either full or nearly full hands free computer use.

The user speaks to the computer via a microphone (normally using a headset) and the computer 'listens' and types or executes spoken commands.

This tool is suited to people for whom dexterity and/or mobility is an issue, people unable to use arms and/or hands, and those with mild repetitive stress injuries. For students with learning difficulties this can assist with thought to paper processing, handwriting legibility and writing phobic problems but this software is not yet a magic bullet.

Software	SpeakQ	Microsoft Vista and Windows 7 system available on most new Microsoft laptops	Dragon version 11
	http://www.gogsoftware.com Both Microsoft and Mac versions available. WordQ & SpeakQ \$385 bundled SpeakQ \$185 (needs WordQ installed)	http://www.microsoft.com Free with Vista operating system	http://www.nuance.com/naturallyspeaking/products/default.asp Both Microsoft and Mac versions available Home version \$140, Premium version \$200 upwards Professional version \$550 - \$1000
Summary of software	SpeakQ is an add-on to WordQ (word prediction). SpeakQ allows the user to input text using voice in two modes: 1. Speak and select – speak single words and select the correct option from a prediction list 2. Speak continuously It offers only a limited range of voice commands and is designed for literacy support rather than hands free computer use. Hands free computer use is not available.	Vista offers a voice recognition program that can be used to input text and/or to operate the computer totally hands free (after the computer is turned on). Vista has a vast array of voice commands not only to manipulate text within a document but also to move between documents, open windows, write emails and to operate your whole computer.	Dragon offers a voice recognition program that can be used to input text or to operate the computer totally hands free (after the computer is turned on). Dragon, like Vista, is designed for totally hands free use with a vast array of voice commands to manipulate text, move between documents, open windows and write emails.
Accuracy after approximately 20 minutes of training All programs tested using fiction book (teenager)	Percentage accuracy : First attempt : 83% Second attempt : 86% Third attempt (another training session prior) : 83% Fourth attempt (another training session prior) : 88%	Percentage accuracy : Vista with English Accent trainer. Approximately 87% accurate on all attempts. After re-training I did not see a change in the accuracy Windows 7 with NZ Accent trainer. Approx. 84% accuracy	Percentage accuracy Trial 1: First attempt : 94%, Second attempt : 98% (generally 95 – 98% accuracy when working. Not uncommon for 100% accuracy under good voice conditions) Trial 2: First attempt : 94%
Text-to-Speech capability	Very Good - can be set to repeat, letters, words and or sentences. Your own voice dictation can also be retrieved.	No	By using simple voice commands you can have a line, paragraph, document or window read to you (Preferred & Professional version only)

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